

I want to voice my opposition to the proposal to drop FCC regulation of broadband services. I feel that our country is best served by a broad base of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) with a multiplicity of features and, most importantly, terms of service.

Without regulation, the market would quickly become controlled by a small cadre of Baby Bell companies who can drive all competitors out of business. Once that has happened, those companies would be free to impose whatever terms and conditions they felt were in the best interests of their shareholders, irrespective of the best interests of the citizens of the United States. This would mean that invasive industry practices that are in use today, such as blocking of certain network protocols, censorship rules for web content, limiting reselling of purchased bandwidth, and limitations on unfettered sending of email would give those companies near total control of our last remaining medium that is not under corporate domination. Today, alternative providers provide a safety valve--if one provider has terms I don't like, I can move to another. When there are only one or two providers, and they all have similar interests in keeping corporate power dominant, then citizens have no democratic alternative.

History shows that when government and business combine to block legitimate expression of dissenting ideas (as they have in Fascistic regimes before) then abusive government practices and civil disorder often follow. Today's internet is the last significant avenue for non-corporate controlled exchange of ideas. It is in the interests of our country to keep it thriving, or risk the evils of unchecked, undemocratic concentration of power.